

French Girl Weds African, Is Killed, in New Paris Play

Women Criticize Role of Bride
—Sarah Bernhardt Soon
in 'Adam and Eve.'

Special Correspondence to THE NEW YORK HERALD.
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It is policy for a Parisienne to marry a foreigner, and especially a North African, and if so should she sacrifice her European habits and suffer humiliation at the hands of her Muslim husband? Such is the problem set by the first important new play to be presented in Paris this season. The play by Pierre Frondale is "L'Inconnue," shown at the Theatre Antoine under the direction of Firmin Gémier.

Opinion seems much divided as to the merits of the play and women in particular criticize the role attributed to the Parisienne acted by Vera Sergine. The plot takes the audience from Paris to Deauville, thence to Africa, where European women visit a harem and then back to Biarritz and to a conclusion in which the husband and Muslim conquer and wins.

Fabienne (Sergine) is a wealthy Parisienne of independent character, just back from New York. In Paris she meets Fasil el Ouarli (Charles Boyer), a wealthy Arab from Morocco. They marry, albeit the world nearest a Frenchwoman's heart, "I love you," have never been pronounced by her husband. Nevertheless both are in love. They join fashionable society at Deauville during the season and give the appearance of a very united couple.

Her Old Admirer Appears.

The first break in their happiness comes on their return to Paris, when one evening while waiting to go out to dine, an old friend and admirer of Fabienne is introduced. Fasil for the first time shows his domineering instincts and orders Fabienne to dismiss her former admirer. Fabienne refuses and objects to receiving peremptory instructions from her husband. The latter remains silent, but a few minutes later leaves the house and immediately returns to his native land.

Fabienne, distracted and distressed, tries to forget her love for Fasil, but she is dominated and with a friend she decides to go to Africa and win back her husband. Unhappily and unprepared, the two women endeavor to enter the harem and are surprised by Fasil while inspecting his harem, wherein he has secluded young and beautiful Moroccan girls. Fabienne and Fasil fall into each other's arms and the Parisienne decides to remain one night in the palace.

Fasil, however, decides otherwise and practically makes the woman a prisoner. She submits to this, but Fasil, to show her that he is her master, announces that under protection of Muslim law he has decided to take a second wife. Fabienne becomes hysterical and plans her escape. Her friend has called in Fabienne's former sweetheart, who to free the woman he still loves attacks and severely injures Fasil, leaving him for dead. Fabienne and her lover then start for Biarritz.

Meets Her Husband Again.

Months later Fasil goes to Biarritz and meets Fabienne, who, unhappy with her lover, falls at Fasil's feet, who, lifting her up, merely remarks: "I took you once. I have taken you once."

At the same time he clasps her hand and a ring which he carries cuts deeply into his wife's hand. The ring was poisoned and Fabienne dies a few minutes later with hands outstretched to her master and a happy smile lighting up her face. Fasil then returns to his palace and harem.

Critics are loud in their praise for the artists, but consider that the play is likely to set up anew two intricate questions: Should a woman implicitly obey her husband and has the latter the right to take either one or more wives or mistresses and expect faithfulness from his legitimate wife? The play does not help to solve either question.

The play is ultra modern in technique. Fasil is shown as a keen aviator and motorist a good dancer and an accomplished society man. Probably for the first time in the history of the French stage divorce was mentioned. Contrary to what happens in reality the request for a divorce made by Fabienne was rejected.

While the management of the Theatre Edouard VII. has not yet announced

the approximate date at which will be shown "Adam and Eve," in which Sarah Bernhardt is to have an important role, it is reported that already numerous demands have been made for bookings. Sarah to-day admits she cannot play for any long stretch of time, and that necessarily any play in which she figures can enjoy only a comparatively limited run.

As Sarah is probably the most popular actress in the country it is conceivable that the Edouard VII. will show "Adam and Eve" for many nights with all seats booked in advance. Sarah Bernhardt is looking forward to appear on a Boulevard theater especially in com-

pany with Sacha Guitry. She states that the play, the plot of which is still kept a close secret, is "cruelly" modern. The conclusion is absolutely unforeseen until the end, and the fourth act will come as a great surprise to the public.

Yet another actress is to take over the active management of a Paris theater. Prior to sailing for the United States early in the new year Mlle. Yvette Guilbert intends to produce comedies and operettas at the Theatre Albert Ier. Her first productions will be French, but she announces that she will keep an open door for all American productions that come her way. She has also signed up expert translators and offers to welcome

any talented American author. Her trip to America will have a twofold purpose, first to appear herself on the American stage and second to find material suitable for her own theater here. As was to be expected, this year's Deauville season was bound to find its way into some review. The new review at the Theatre Marigny is highly sur-

castle in regard to habitues of the fashionable watering place. King Alfonso of Spain comes in for some bitter criticism and his court at Deauville is amusingly ridiculed when the Marigny dwarf Delphin comes on representing a Spanish grandee.

Other amusing sketches in the review unapologetically assail Pierre Benoit, the

well known author, for his recent mysterious escapade. The Free Comrade of Montmartre is shown in the throes of a revolution which ends in many marriages. In general the review is the usual "risky" sort without however becoming too indecent. Nude women contrary to the usual rule, have no conspicuous parts in the show.

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